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SUBJECT: CWD deer carcass disposal and transportation recommendations for Barron, Burnett, Polk and Washburn counties

Chronic wasting disease (CWD) can be spread among deer by both direct contact between animals and exposure to environments contaminated with CWD prions, the protein that causes the disease. Exposure to an area where a CWD-positive carcass has decomposed could be enough to cause infection in deer. “The chance that a deer has CWD is likely very low, but we won’t know that for sure until we have more extensive sampling. We cannot take any chances to have this disease spread any further,” said Mike Zeckmeister, DNR Northern Region wildlife supervisor.

Because of this risk, it is important that the carcasses of deer within Barron, Burnett, Polk and Washburn counties, including all bones and other waste from butchering, be disposed of in a way that protects uninfected deer from exposure to CWD. Options include:

- Disposal in a landfill that accepts deer waste
- Bury the carcass waste deep enough to prevent scavengers from digging it up

Landfills are a safe and cost-effective option for disposing of carcass waste from deer potentially infected with CWD. Landfill disposal establishes a barrier between uninfected deer and deer-carcass waste that potentially contains infectious CWD material. Scientific research has shown that when properly disposed of in a landfill, prions are extremely unlikely to migrate from the landfill disposal site. There are disposal methods that destroy prions, such as incineration at 1800 degrees Fahrenheit or digestion in sodium hydroxide, but these methods are cost-prohibitive and not practical for the public.

Carcass movement and transportation

Currently, Wisconsin law does not restrict the movement of wild-deer carcasses, or certain parts of those carcasses, killed within Barron, Burnett, Polk and Washburn counties or other counties outside of the established chronic wasting disease management zone (CWD-MZ) in southern Wisconsin. “However, hunters, taxidermists, and meat processors are encouraged to follow these best management practices to minimize any additional spread of CWD,” said David Zebro, North Region warden. It is important to mention that the state of Minnesota has carcass

movement restrictions from any area with a CWD infected deer population, including Barron, Burnett, Polk and Washburn counties. Hunters who wish to transport deer from this area into Minnesota should follow the Best Management Practices (BMPs) listed below.

The established BMPs encourage hunters to follow the practices listed below when processing a deer killed in the above listed counties that are going to be transported outside these counties. The parts from wild cervids killed within Barron, Burnett, Polk and Washburn counties should only be transported beyond those counties if they are in the below condition:

- Meat that is cut and wrapped (either commercially or privately)
- Quarters or other portions of meat with no part of the head or spinal column attached
- Meat that has been deboned
- Hides with no heads attached
- Finished taxidermy heads
- Antlers with no tissue attached
- Clean skull plates with no lymphoid or brain tissue attached
- Clean skulls with no lymphoid or brain tissue attached
- Upper canine teeth (also known as buglers, whistlers or ivories)

The exception to these BMP's and the only time not to follow these recommendations would be when a hunter takes the whole deer carcass directly to a taxidermist or meat processor. This exception does not apply to deer being transported into Minnesota.

The purpose of following these practices is to prevent tissues most likely to contain CWD from being brought to areas of where CWD does not yet exist, thus minimizing the spread of CWD.